



# Congressman JIM DAVIS



*Representing the People of the 11th District of Florida*

Summer 2001

## Congressman Jim Davis Leads Florida's Fight Against Oil Drilling

**T**his Summer, Congressman Jim Davis spearheaded the fight to protect Florida's beaches from new oil and gas drilling off the coast of Florida.

Despite uncertainties about the impact of drilling on Florida's pristine shores, this Spring, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior indicated her intention to lease Section 181, a 5.9 million acre portion of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, for oil and gas drilling. Section 181 was just 200 miles from Tampa Bay and less than 20 miles from Pensacola, but was estimated to hold fewer than 400 million barrels of oil—just enough oil to supply our nation for 21 days.

In response, Congressman Davis offered an amendment to the Interior Appropriations Bill to delay the Department from leasing Section 181. The amendment passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 247 to 164, sending a clear message that millions of Americans who enjoy Florida's coastal treasures share Floridians' objections to offshore drilling.

Just two weeks later, with growing opposition in Congress to drilling off the Florida coast, the Governor of Florida reached an agreement with the Secretary of the Department of Interior to shrink the area under consideration. The reduced Section 181 is 100 miles from Pensacola and 285 miles from Tampa Bay. Based on this agreement, the Senate rejected the Davis amendment to delay drilling, allowing the Department of Interior to proceed with a December 2001 auction of the reduced Section 181.

Unfortunately, the Department of Interior recently estimated that drilling in the revised Section 181 presents up to a 37 percent risk of a large spill (42,000 gallons of oil). "As Congress and the President work together to address America's energy needs, I will continue to push for an energy plan that focuses on long-term solutions that promote a cleaner, healthier environment rather than promoting short-term fixes that target national treasures like Florida's beaches."



*Congressman Jim Davis joined Principal Laura Zavatkay on a tour of Roland Park Middle School's I CAN Learn classrooms, a federally supported program used at a dozen middle schools across Hillsborough County. I CAN Learn is an innovative new computerized curriculum that is letting students master Algebra at their own pace and allowing teachers to give individual attention to students without holding up the entire class.*

## **VISIT CONGRESSMAN JIM DAVIS' WEBSITE!**

Find out what's going on in the nation's Capitol! Next time you are online, visit

**[www.house.gov/jimdavis/](http://www.house.gov/jimdavis/)**

for legislative updates, recent press statements and photos from Washington and Tampa. Learn more about the constituent services offered through our offices and link to a host of federal government web pages.

This site will even allow you to share your views using the "Write Your Representative" system.

## Education Update

*Ninety percent of America's children are educated in public schools, so Congress has a responsibility to help states address problems like the growing shortage of certified teachers and overcrowded and unsafe schools.*

### ***A Certified Teacher in Every Classroom:***

Over the next decade, Florida must recruit more than 162,000 teachers to ensure that there is a certified teacher at the head of every class. "With a teacher shortage crisis at our doorstep, we must begin to seek new, innovative ways to at-

ibility to target federal funds where they are needed most. The Senate and the House are working on a compromise education reform bill and will hopefully reach an agreement this Fall.

### ***Testing and Accountability:***

This Spring, Congressman Davis hosted several school meetings in Hillsborough County to discuss education reform. Parents, teachers and students shared concerns that Florida's standardized educational testing has robbed students of their desire to learn, given parents who want to help their children little if any useful guidance and stripped teachers of their ability to teach their lesson plans.

Congressman Davis brought these concerns to the House floor during a debate on legislation to require nationwide testing in math and reading in grades three through eight. Davis, who believes the principal purpose of standardized testing should be diagnostic, voted against this testing plan and is working with the President's education advi-



***Congressman Davis hosts a press conference at Raymond James Stadium to highlight the teacher shortage. The State of Florida will need to hire enough teachers over the next ten years to fill the stadium more than twofold.***

tract more qualified teachers to our classrooms," said Congressman Davis.

Last Winter, Congress passed Davis' Transition to Teaching Act to help recruit and train qualified mid-career professionals who want to become teachers. Funding for the program will be distributed beginning in September. This year, Congressman Davis is working with colleagues to pass H.R. 839, a bill to establish a teaching fellowship program to provide scholarships to prospective teachers and H.R. 687, legislation to provide student loan forgiveness to teachers.

### ***Helping Our Schools Succeed:***

This Spring, Republicans and Democrats in the House of Representatives, working together to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), passed a bill that will double funding for America's most disadvantaged students through the Title 1 program. This legislation would also strengthen teacher training programs, reduce class sizes and give schools more flex-



***At a recent meeting with Hillsborough County teachers, Congressman Davis discussed federal education reform proposals which would mandate standardized testing of students in grades three through eight.***

sors to ensure that the final bill focuses on individual student assessment rather than testing for the sake of testing.

"Testing has a role in ensuring accountability for taxpayers, but the primary focus of any testing plan should be to identify students who need extra help and the specific subjects they need to work on – to help teachers teach and chil-

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dren learn. I hope the final House and Senate compromise bill will focus on diagnostics.”

### **Relieving Overcrowded Schools:**

On the first day of school this year, Hillsborough County Schools opened their doors to 5,000 more students than last year’s opening day. With the exploding number of school-aged children in Florida, overcrowded schools simply cannot keep up with demand for new school faci-



*Congressman Davis talks to an American Government class at Armwood High School about his work in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

ties. Hillsborough County alone will need \$42 million over the next five years to address its unmet school construction needs.

To address this problem, Congressman Davis is co-sponsoring legislation to provide Florida with nearly \$1.2 billion in interest free school construction bonds. “The Leadership in the House of Representatives should bring this issue up for a vote so we can help ensure that our students do not have to go to school in unsafe, overcrowded classrooms.”

## Protecting Patients’ Rights



In July, the House passed legislation permitting patients to hold their HMOs liable in state courts, subject to federal law and rules. However, the legislation does not adequately

allow patients to challenge a delay or denial of care by their HMOs. Congressman Davis supports the Senate-passed Patients Bill of Rights which gives more meaningful protections to patients who object to medical treatment decisions that have resulted in improper care or no care.

“Patients battling an illness or disease should not have to battle their insurance company to get the care they thought they were paying for,” said Congressman Davis. “The conference committee, working to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the managed care bills, should craft a compromise that will force health plans to think twice before putting cost estimates before necessary patient care.”

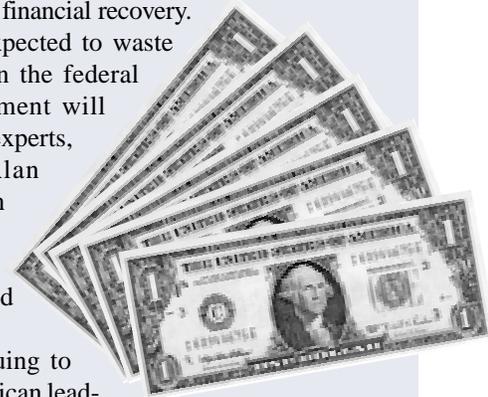
## Striking a Balance In Our Federal Budget

As a member of the House Budget Committee, Congressman Jim Davis will continue to fight for responsible federal budgets that put first priority on paying down our nation’s \$3.4 trillion federal debt and preserving Social Security and Medicare for future generations. Since Congress passed the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, the debt has been cut by more than \$360 million – a step in the right direction on a long road to financial recovery.

This year alone, taxpayers are expected to waste \$217 billion on interest payments on the federal debt—more than the federal government will spend on Medicare alone. Economic experts, like Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, believe that paying down the federal debt will help keep interest rates low, reducing the amount that Americans spend on mortgages and on car and student loans.

Unfortunately, instead of continuing to pay down the debt this year, the Republican leadership placed first priority on a tax cut of more than \$1.6 trillion. Supporters of this large tax cut hoped that the economy would regain full strength and the resulting budget surplus could be used to pay down the federal debt. Instead, as our economy has slowed down, projected surpluses have fallen dramatically, increasing the risk that the federal debt will begin to grow again.

Congressman Davis will continue to support budget plans that strike a responsible balance between paying down the debt and providing tax relief to all Americans. This year, Davis supported a marriage penalty relief plan to ease the burden on working families, an increase to the child tax credit and tax savings for small business pension plans.



## We're Here To Help You



### **Academy Appointments**

The U.S. Service Academies — Army, Air Force, Navy and Merchant Marine — offer excellent educational opportunities for high school graduates. High school juniors seeking nomination can request an application from our Tampa office.



### **Problems With Federal Agencies**

Sometimes dealing with the federal bureaucracy can be difficult. Our Tampa office can often help when you experience problems with federal matters like Social Security, Medicare, Veterans Administration claims, student financial aid, Small Business Administration loans and the Internal Revenue Service.



### **Legislation**

Through our office, we can provide information on bills pending before Congress.



### **Washington**

We can provide information concerning tours in Washington, as well as gallery passes for the House and Senate.



## Out with the Chads and in with a Fair Election System

As a member of the House Administration Committee, Congressman Jim Davis is working to pass legislation to ensure that Election Day 2002 will not result in another fight over “hanging” and “pregnant” chads. The Voting Improvement Act, H.R. 775, provides up to \$6,000 per precinct from the federal government to help states and localities replace their punch card systems with equipment that will allow voters to verify the accuracy and completeness of their votes before turning in their ballots.

“Protecting the fundamental, Constitutional rights of voters is not a partisan or parochial issue – it is a responsibility shared by Republicans and Democrats and state, local and federal officials alike,” said Congressman Davis. “I hope Congress will pass legislation this Fall to help Florida’s communities modernize their election day equipment.”

 *At a voting technology demonstration, Congressman Davis tests out the latest optical scan equipment.*

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